

GARBAGE GAZETTE

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection

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Recycling Program Hosts Composting Workshop for Local Nature Centers

On May 15, 1995, Connecticut DEP's Recycling Program hosted a day-long workshop for educators at local nature centers. A total of 30 people attended, representing 15 different facilities. The meeting was held at Northwest Park in Windsor. Each nature center that attended received a variety of equipment and resource materials which will enable them to operate their own composting education program. Some of the materials that they received included a vermicomposting bin, a composting thermometer, a commercial compost bin, copies of DEP's videos "Turning Your Spoils To Soil" and "Don't Trash Grass!", a supply of DEP's composting and grasscycling brochures, a resource notebook full of information about composting and children's activities, and a number of other items.

In exchange for receiving these materials each nature center agreed to host a minimum of two composting workshops a year for the general public. Grasscycling and vermicomposting will be integrated into these programs as well. They also agreed to establish an outdoor demonstration site which will contain the commercial bin that they received from DEP and at least one homemade compost bin. These demonstration sites will be located in areas that are easily accessible to the public so that anyone visiting the nature center will have an opportunity to see what an active composting bin looks like.

We are very pleased that so many of our state's nature centers have chosen to participate in this program, which will help to spread the composting and source reduction message at the local level. If you have any questions about this program, or would like to know the participating center closest to you, please contact Meg Enkler or K.C. Alexander at 424-3365.

New Video Available On Source-Separated Composting

"Clean from the Start" takes an in-depth look at the realities of source-separated composting. Whether you are a local official, solid waste planner, municipal engineer, or just an interested neighbor this program will bring you up to speed on the latest options and issues of composting source-separated organics on a commercial scale. Narrated by Christopher Reeve, this video will introduce you to some of the country's best facilities in action. These facilities accept only clean inputs - because they want to produce the cleanest useable compost for their customers. Some of the facilities featured include Connecticut's Earthgro, Disney World, and the New York State Prison System to name just a few.

This hour-long video also includes a segment titled, "Composting for Your Community", which provides a look at what it takes to prepare a community for a successful backyard composting program. For more information call Berkshire Film & Video at (413) 442-9172.

Providing this information does not constitute an endorsement by Connecticut DEP.

New Vermicomposting Video Now Available

"Wormania!", a 26-minute video for children ages 8 and up is now available from Flowerfield Enterprises. This fast-paced program features close-up scenes of live earthworms in their natural habitat, footage of baby worms hatching from their cocoons, a look at the rhythmic beating of a worm's five pairs of beating hearts and much more. The basics of how to set up your own worm bin as a management tool for home generated food scraps is also covered. For more information call (616) 327-7009. *Providing this information does not constitute an endorsement by Connecticut DEP.*



Reuse Opportunity

You could help hundreds of children this year, and reduce air pollution by participating in the "We pick it up, you write it off!" program sponsored by Big Brothers /Big Sisters of Southwestern Connecticut. Just donate your unwanted car, truck, trailer or motorcycle to Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Your vehicle will be driven or towed away free of charge. You may deduct its fair market value on your income tax. For more details, please call, (800) 605-9366.

East German Trabant Presents Disposal Problem

Manufacture of the East German Trabant automobile has ceased and thousands of former East Germans are selling, giving away or abandoning their old Trabants, which once cost the equivalent of a year's average salary. However, the switch away from this vehicle presents the federal Environmental Ministry with a unique problem. That is, how to dispose of mountains of abandoned Trabants. They cannot be recycled like other cars. Burning their synthetic body would release dioxins into the air, while, if buried, the car would rot, tainting the soil with the same carcinogens.

Scientists have already patented bacteria that can digest the cellulose resins of the car's body. Now they are trying to break down the main ingredient, phenolformaldehyde resins. It is hoped that in a few years a process will be perfected in which bacteria will reduce the carriage to a few pounds of residue. There are no plans to ban the Trabant. It is expected that German consumers will eliminate use of the car on their own.



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